Congratulations to AdvanceVT Graduate Fellows

AdvanceVT has awarded its first three graduate fellowships to Megan Elwood Madden, Olga Pierrakos, and Miriam Stewart.

Madden is a doctoral student in geosciences, working with Dr. Robert Bodnar to develop new isotopic methods to measure the nature of aqueous environments in the solar system and the impact of meteorites on fluid-bearing materials and is examining chemical weathering patterns on Mars.

Pierrakos, a mechanical engineering doctoral student working with Dr. Pavlos Vlachos, is modeling the flow past mechanical heart valve prostheses and the left ventricle of the heart to gain a better understanding of prosthetic hardware and to help doctors improve the clinical procedures associated with these prosthetic devices.

Stewart is a civil and environmental engineering doctoral student of Dr. George Filz, looking at a new technology called columnar reinforcement, which stabilizes roadway embankments, thereby speeding up the roadway construction process and minimizing impacts on society and the environment.

Congratulations to AdvanceVT Leadership Fellows

Dr. Brenda Winkel, Biology
Dr. Winkel will be appointed Associate Director of the Fralin Center for Biotechnology, working with the Director to provide leadership and vision for the Center. She will also lead an effort to establish a graduate program in plant sciences and organize a research symposium to discuss the future of research in this area and provide insights into successful graduate programs.

Dr. Andrea Dietrich, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Dr. Dietrich will work with several faculty and administrators in the college of engineering to develop the skills necessary to start up and manage a center for drinking water taste and odor and infrastructure research. She will also participate in a leadership development program at the Center for Creative Leadership and visit a comparable research center at Montana State University.
“Everyone needs to be personable, able to network, and qualified. However, women in particular need to have tenacity and energy to persevere.”
- Virginia Tech Associate Professor

Tenure Track Women Faculty in Science


("Top 50" data from "A National Analysis of Diversity in Science and Engineering Faculties at Research Universities“, Nelson and Rogers, 2003)

Tenure Track Women Faculty in Engineering


Proportion of Women Faculty at Virginia Tech by Rank, 2003

University wide:
Professor 10.6%
Assoc. Prof. 26.6%
Assoc. Prof. 38.6%

College of Science:
Professor 8.1%
Assoc. Prof. 19.7%
Assist. Prof. 36.4%

College of Engineering:
Professor 3.2%
Assoc. Prof. 10.9%
Assist. Prof. 19.3%

Virginia Tech Science Faculty by Rank and Gender, Fall 2003

Virginia Tech Engineering Faculty by Rank and Gender, Fall 2003
Ask Gail

Virginia Tech’s Advance proposal describes the experiences of “Gail”, a fictitious female junior faculty member in engineering, and how her relationships with her male peers change as a result of AdvanceVT program activities.

“Gail” has taken on a life of her own as a metaphor for the Advance program. The AdvanceVT Team offers its collective wisdom about being a woman in science and engineering to anyone who would like to send a question to AskGail@vt.edu.

Comments and observations are also welcome. Please be sure to indicate if the response should be confidential, otherwise questions and responses will be posted on the AdvanceVT web site.

Congratulations to AdvanceVT Research Seed Grant Recipients

AdvanceVT research seed grants are intended to assist junior faculty to prepare more competitive proposals for external research funding. The following individuals will receive support from AdvanceVT with matching funds from their college and/or department for academic year 2004-2005:

Lynn Adler, Biology, “The Effect of Auxiliary Herbivores on Tritrophic Interactions: Collaborative Research to Prepare for USDA Funding”

Julie Dunsmore, Psychology, “Biobehavioral Correlates of Parents’ Beliefs about Children’s Emotions”

Naira Hovakimyan, Aero and Ocean Engineering, “Active Vision Control Systems”

Linsey Marr, Civil and Environmental Engineering, “Measurement of Urban Air Pollutant Emissions”

Kathleen Meehan, Electrical and Computer Engineering, “Active Surface Plasmon Resonance Structures with Application in Biosensing and Optical Computing”

Corina Sandu, Mechanical Engineering, “Computational Tools for Advanced Modeling and Simulation of Off-Road Vehicles”

Detailed descriptions and application information for next year can be found at www.advance.vt.edu.

AdvanceVT Visiting Scholars

Recommendations are invited for speakers who reflect or support the goals of AdvanceVT. Proposals are accepted at any time, and strongly encouraged in late summer/early fall.

AdvanceVT Colloquia: Distinguished Lectures
Funding is available to bring outstanding, nationally and internationally recognized speakers to Virginia Tech for a public lecture, reception, and private meetings with faculty, students, and administrators.

AdvanceVT Colloquia: AdvanceVT Scholars
Funding is available to invite potential faculty candidates, especially mid- or early-career faculty, post-doctoral researchers and advanced graduate students, for short campus visits to attract their interest in possible future faculty positions.